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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9306
INFO RUCNARF/ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING IMMEDIATE 3019
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA IMMEDIATE 3366
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL IMMEDIATE 9700
RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA IMMEDIATE 8755
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE IMMEDIATE 2571
RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA IMMEDIATE 1093
RUEHKSO/AMCONSUL SAPPORO IMMEDIATE 9248
RUEHIN/AIT TAIPEI IMMEDIATE 7578
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUCPDOC/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEATRS/TREASURY DEPT WASHDC IMMEDIATE
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 TOKYO 000264

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/09/2020

TAGS: PREL PGOV PINR JA

SUBJECT: DPJ SECRETARY GENERAL OZAWA DESIRES STRONG
U.S.-JAPAN RELATIONS; EXPRESSES CONCERN REGARDING CHINA

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Classified By: Ambassador John V. Roos, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) Secretary General Ichiro Ozawa told Ambassador Roos and Assistant Secretary Campbell that he recognized the importance of the U.S.-Japan relationship and that he wanted to expand Japan's global partnership in a February 2 meeting. However, his top priority is implementing DPJ policy objectives to position the party for the July Upper House election. The Secretary General also emphasized that honest bilateral communications were important. Ozawa expressed concerns about the growing influence of the Chinese military in Chinese domestic politics and said the United States and Japan needed to deal with China from a position of strength. He supported the concept of a U.S.-Japan-China trilateral and would like to organize a DPJ Diet delegation visit to the United States this spring. End Summary.

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U.S.-Japan Relations
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¶2. (C) During his meeting on February 2 with Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Kurt Campbell (which lasted about an hour), Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) Secretary General Ichiro Ozawa stated that Prime Minister Hatoyama and 'all of us' in the DPJ wished to cooperate with the United States so that Japan could play an even greater role in contributing to world peace. Ozawa explained that this was always his goal for Japan and said he looked forward to working with the Assistant Secretary in the future to achieve it.

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The DPJ and Domestic Politics
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¶3. (C) Asked about his views on Japanese politics and what could be happening in the coming months, Ozawa replied -- after a disclaimer that his position does not allow him to comment on policy matters -- that the DPJ came to power in a

short amount of time and was still a very young party. Therefore, Ozawa continued, the party has not yet been able to tap into its full capability to win support for both its domestic and international policies. However, there were many policy items that were included in the recent budget formulation process, which would have been unthinkable during the days of Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) rule and which will boost popular support for the DPJ if implemented, Ozawa claimed. That was why it was so important to pass the budget and related implementing legislation this March--so that the public would begin seeing the impact of this new government prior to the July Upper House election. Although Japan's relationship with the United States was an important primary priority, the biggest issue for the DPJ as well as its greatest challenge was that the party be able to assert its own policies vis-a-vis foreign countries.

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China and Trilateral Cooperation
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¶4. (C) Regarding a possible forum for trilateral cooperation between the United States, Japan, and the People's Republic of China, Ozawa agreed with Campbell that it was a good idea in every way if the three countries could exchange views in an effective manner. Ozawa said that he has been informing his 'friends in the U.S. government' that China is a nation with an extremely long history, through which its people have been able to accumulate wisdom on a wide range of topics. The Secretary General expressed that he was fortunate to be close to many in the PRC leadership, and suggested that because of Japan's longer association with China and the resulting familiarity, Japan should be playing a greater role

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in China's relations with the rest of the world. However, he continued, the reality is that Japan is not yet able to fully play such a role, despite his desire that it do exactly that.

¶5. (C) The current issues of Iraq, Iran, and Afghanistan fade in comparison with future issues regarding China, Ozawa said. If these issues are not resolved skillfully, he asserted, the stability of the entire world could be undermined. In particular, Ozawa expressed concern about the growing role and influence of the Chinese military in Chinese domestic politics. In its dialogue with the Chinese, the United States should not hesitate to negotiate with a firm stance and stand fast when necessary, Ozawa advised.

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Kakuei Tanaka and Japanese Political Philosophy
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¶6. (C) Ozawa said that former Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka was his political mentor as well as boss, and possessed an extremely magnetic personality in addition to great wisdom. Pointing out the opinion of some that Tanaka would have been able to exercise strong leadership if he were alive and involved in politics today, Ozawa acknowledged that 'times were very different now.' In the postwar era, Japan received support from the United States, and at the same time Tanaka was able to forge a very productive relationship with the Japanese bureaucracy in which he was able to get people to 'do things for him.' Pointing to the fact that Tanaka was able to reach the top position in government despite lacking an elite academic or family background, Ozawa said that Tanaka's success was a testament to his incredible efforts. Ozawa hypothesized that it may have been easier to be a leader during the former prime minister's era.

¶7. (C) Japanese people tend not to favor a leader who is too strong, and although the media may call for stronger leadership today, their true thoughts are different, Ozawa claimed. In fact, he continued, in Japan's long history, harmony was always deemed more desirable than strong,

singular leadership. Proof of the importance Japanese place on consensus was the practice (of last resort) during the LDP period of asking those who disagreed with an emerging consensus to leave the meeting room when a decision had to be made so that there could be 'unanimous consent.' Although the United States may be frustrated by Japan's perceived inability to reach a consensus and make a decision, Ozawa asked for understanding on this Japanese trait.

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High Level Bilateral Communication
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¶ 8. (C) In response to Campbell's reciprocal call for understanding of Washington's perspective, possibly through a visit of DPJ Diet members to the United States during Japan's Golden Week holiday (late April to early May), Ozawa thanked the Assistant Secretary for his good faith. Referring to his recent trip to China, in which he met with Hu Jintao and was able to arrange photo opportunities with the Premier for each member of his massive (more than 140 parliamentarians and their supporters) delegation, Ozawa wondered if similar treatment could be afforded to him and his delegation on a possible trip to Washington.

¶ 9. (C) Admitting that he himself was often criticized for being too blunt, Ozawa encouraged U.S. officials to be more direct and candid when it came to U.S.-Japan relations and communication. While he understood the need to be cautious when speaking to the public, Ozawa suggested more bluntness when speaking to politicians and bureaucrats, and said the ensuing relationship of trust would ensure that even harsh words would not be interpreted as a threat and instead foster

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closer communication. Responding to the Ambassador's emphasis on close communication between the United States and Japan at the highest levels, Ozawa suggested the two of them meet informally at any time the Ambassador wished.

¶ 10. (C) The Secretary General explained that during his experience of negotiating with the United States on a wide variety of issues (trade friction involving public works, construction, telecommunication, FSX, beef, citrus), he was always aware of and heavily burdened by the U.S. assumption that Japanese were 'liars' and 'did not live up to our commitments.' Although 'I am here to honor my personal commitments and staking my political life on them,' Ozawa pledged, Japan had its own assertions and could no longer listen to and accept everything the United States said. Despite the arduous negotiations during the period of U.S.-Japan trade friction, it was only after a thorough discussion that both parties were able to understand the other's position and thus able to part with satisfaction, Ozawa reminisced.

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Participants
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¶ 11. (SBU)

USG
Assistant Secretary Campbell
Ambassador Roos
Yumiko Miyazaki (interpreter)

GOJ
Ichiro Ozawa
Shoji Toyohara (Head of Secretary General Ozawa's Office)
Kenichi Suzuki (Secretary General Ozawa's Office)
Yuka Uchida (DPJ International Division)

This cable has been cleared by Assistant Secretary Campbell.
ROOS